



USDA-NASS

# Montana Crop & Livestock Reporter

survey results summary issued twice monthly by the  
**Montana Agricultural Statistics Service**

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## HIGHLIGHTS:

Red Meat Production  
Cattle on Feed  
Milk Production  
Cattle & Beef Cows Co. Est. Avail.  
Hogs & Pigs  
Ag Chemical Use  
Egg Production  
Potato Stocks  
Farm Labor  
Organic Agriculture

### Red Meat Production Up

Montana slaughter plants produced 1.3 million pounds, dressed weight, of red meat during April 2003, up 8 percent from April 2002 and the same amount as March 2003. Cattle slaughter totaled 1,500 head, equal to that one year ago. The average live weight, at 1,162 pounds, decreased 15 pounds from last year.

During April there were 1,100 hogs slaughtered, up 200 head from a year ago. The average live weight, at 243 pounds, was up 10 pounds from last year. April sheep slaughter in the state totaled 300 head, up from 200 head in April 2002. The average live weight increased 17 pounds to 140 pounds.

Commercial red meat production for the United States totaled 3.85 billion pounds in April, down 1 percent from the 3.90 billion pounds produced in April 2002.

Beef production, at 2.15 billion pounds, was 2 percent below the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.97 million head, up 1 percent from April 2002. The average live weight was 1,209 pounds, down 18 pounds from April a year ago.

Veal production totaled 16.0 million pounds, 1 percent below April a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 79,300 head, down 3 percent from April 2002. The average live weight was 336 pounds, up 9 pounds from April a year ago.

Pork production totaled 1.66 billion pounds, down 1 percent from the previous

year. Hog kill totaled 8.33 million head, 1 percent below April 2002. The average live weight was 268 pounds, up 1 pounds from April a year ago.

Lamb and mutton production, at 19.4 million pounds, was up 2 percent from April 2002. Sheep slaughter totaled 295,600 head, 6 percent above last year. The average live weight was 132 pounds, down 5 pounds from April a year ago.

January to April red meat production was 15.12 billion pounds, virtually unchanged from 2002. Accumulated beef production was down 2 percent from last year, veal was up 6 percent, pork was up 1 percent, and lamb and mutton was down 11 percent.

### U.S. Cattle on Feed Down

Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 10.53 million head on May 1, 2003. The inventory was 4 percent below May 1, 2002 and 6 percent below May 1, 2001.

Placements in feedlots during April totaled 1.87 million, 29 percent above 2002 and 21 percent above 2001. Net placements were 1.81 million. During April, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds were 296,000, 600-699 pounds were 324,000, 700-799 pounds were 613,000, and 800 pounds and greater were 637,000.

Marketings of fed cattle during April totaled 1.99 million, 1 percent below 2002 but 9 percent above 2001. Other disappearance totaled 63,000 during April, 24 percent below 2002 and 29 percent below 2001.

### April Milk Production

Milk production in the 20 major States during April totaled 12.7 billion pounds, up 0.8 percent from April 2002. March revised production, at 13.0 billion pounds, was up 1.2 percent from March 2002. The March revision represented a decrease of 0.2 percent or 27 million pounds from last

month's preliminary production estimate.

Production per cow in the 20 major States averaged 1,625 pounds for April, 4 pounds above April 2002. The number of milk cows on farms in the 20 major States was 7.80 million head, 42,000 head more than April 2002, but 11,000 head less than March 2003.

### Livestock County Estimates Now Available

County estimates for the January 1, 2003, cattle and calf inventory are now available under [www.nass.usda.gov/mt](http://www.nass.usda.gov/mt) county data. District estimates for December 1, 2002 All Chickens and county estimates for December 1, 2002 Hogs and Pigs and January 1, 2003 Sheep and Lambs will be available at a later date.

The Montana Agricultural Statistics Service compiles the only annual county estimates for Montana. These county estimates are based on livestock surveys conducted at the end of 2002 and the beginning of 2003.

Questionnaires were sent to a sample of farmers and ranchers throughout Montana asking for information on the livestock inventories. About 6,500 questionnaires were tabulated and summarized. Thanks to all the farmers and ranchers who participated in the survey!

### April Pig Crop Down 4 Percent

The April 2003 U.S. pig crop at 8.38 million head, was 4 percent below the previous year. Sows farrowing during this period totaled 944 thousand head, 4 percent below last year. The average pigs per litter for April increased to 8.88, compared to 8.85 last year.

The U.S. inventory of sows and gilts on May 1, 2003, was 5.80 million head, down 3 percent from May 1, 2002. U.S. sows and gilts bred during April totaled 1.15 million head, down 2 percent from the previous year.

## 2002 Agricultural Chemical Use for Wheat

Montana winter wheat producers applied nitrogen fertilizer to 88% of the acreage harvested for the 2002 crop. A total of 38.4 million pounds of nitrogen fertilizer was applied to the 750,000 acres of winter wheat harvested in Montana. Of the harvested area, 81% received phosphate fertilizer while potash was used on 46% of the acres. Total application of phosphate was 18.5 million pounds and potash was 4.8 million pounds.

Winter wheat producers applied 433,000 pounds of herbicides to 80% of the harvested winter wheat acres in 2002. The most common herbicide used was 2, 4-D with 56% of the acreage sprayed. Glyphosate and Dicamba were the next most popular herbicides, used at 30 and 17%, respectively, of the harvested acreage covered.

Spring wheat producers in Montana planted 3.75 million acres of spring wheat in 2002. Sixty-six percent of these acres had nitrogen fertilizer applied to them. A total of 97.8 million pounds of nitrogen was applied. Phosphate was applied to 54% and potash to 21% of the planted spring wheat acreage. Total application of phosphate was 47.0 million pounds and potash was 14.9 million pounds.

Producers applied 2.1 million pounds of herbicides to 89% of the total spring wheat acres planted in 2002. The most widely used herbicide was 2, 4-D with 65% of the acreage sprayed. Dicamba was the second most common herbicide, used on 32%, and Metsulfuron-methyl was used on 22% of the planted acres.

Nationally, winter wheat producers applied nitrogen to 86% of the 2002 winter wheat harvested acreage in the surveyed states. Fifty-five percent of the harvested winter wheat acreage received phosphate while potash was applied to 15% of the harvested acreage.

Herbicides were applied to 38% of the 2002 winter wheat harvested acreage in the surveyed states. Metsulfuron-methyl and 2,4-D were both applied to 13% of the

winter wheat harvested acreage followed by Chlorsulfuron at 10 percent.

Nitrogen fertilizer was applied to 86% of the 2002 other spring wheat planted acreage in the surveyed states (MN, MT, and ND). Phosphate was applied to 74% of the planted acreage while potash was applied to 27% of the planted acreage in the states surveyed. Spring wheat producers treated 91% of the other spring wheat planted acreage with herbicides; MCPA was applied to 47% of the planted acreage followed by 2,4-D at 36 percent.

The agricultural chemical use estimates in this report refer to on-farm use of commercial fertilizers and pesticides on targeted crops for the 2002 crop year. Farm and ranch operators were enumerated late in the growing season after the farm operator had indicated that planned applications were completed. The data was compiled from the Agricultural Resources Management Survey (ARMS) and from the Objective Yield Survey, with the main portion of data collection being conducted during the months of October to December 2002.

## April Egg Production Up Slightly

U.S. egg production totaled 7.13 billion during April 2003, up slightly from last year. Production included 6.05 billion table eggs and 1.08 billion hatching eggs, of which 1.02 billion were broiler-type and 63.0 million were egg-type.

The total number of layers during April 2003 averaged 336 million, down slightly from a year earlier. April egg production per 100 layers was 2,123 eggs, up 1% from April 2002. April 2003 contained 22 weekdays and four Saturdays, equal to April 2002.

All layers in the U.S. on May 1, 2003, totaled 334 million, down 1% from a year ago. The 334 million layers consisted of 274 million layers producing table or commercial type eggs, 57.6 million layers producing broiler-type hatching eggs, and

2.77 million layers producing egg-type hatching eggs. Rate of lay per day on May 1, 2003, averaged 70.5 eggs per 100 layers, up 2% from a year ago.

Laying flocks in the 30 major egg producing States produced 6.66 billion eggs during April 2003, down slightly from a year ago. The average number of layers during April, at 313 million, was down 1% from a year ago.

## May 1 Potato Stocks

Montana potato producers held 400,000 cwt. of potatoes in storage on May 1, 2003, down 11% from the previous year. Twelve percent of the 2002 Montana potato crop is still in storage, compared with 14% last year.

The 15 major potato storage States held 83.2 million cwt of potatoes on May 1, 2003, up 2% from last year but 24% below 2001. Potatoes in storage account for 20% of the 2002 fall storage State's production, down 1 percentage point from last year.

Disappearance, at 328 million cwt, from the start of harvest in 2002 to May 1, is up 7% from the same period last year but 6% below two years ago. April disappearance was 41.9 million cwt, up 8% from a year ago but 6% below two years ago. Shrink and loss, at 25.8 million cwt, is up 3% from last year but 28% below two years ago.

Processors used 161 million cwt of 2002 crop potatoes so far this season, up 9% from a year ago but 5% below two years ago. April usage of 16.5 million cwt is virtually the same as last year but 11% below two years ago. Dehydrators used 36.1 million cwt. to date.

Western States held 65.0 million cwt of potatoes in storage on May 1, up 4% from last year but 26% below two years ago. Potato stocks in Idaho and Colorado are both up 6% from last year. Washington's potato stocks are 8% above last year but Oregon's storage is down 26%. California's stocks are up nearly four fold from last year, while Montana's are down 11 percent.

## Hired Workers Down 13 Percent

There were 938,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches the week of April 6-12, 2003, down 13 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 781,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 157,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$9.16 per hour during the April 2003 reference week, up 33 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$8.40 per hour, up 34 cents from last April, while livestock workers earned \$8.75 per hour compared with \$8.43 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$8.49 per hour, was up 34 cents from last year. The number of hours worked averaged 40.1 hours for hired workers during the survey week, compared with 40.2 hours a year ago.

## Organic Agriculture Gaining Ground

Organic agriculture is expanding rapidly in the United States, as consumer interest

continues to gather momentum and new organic production and marketing systems evolve. In the wake of USDA's implementation of national standards in October 2002, continued growth in the industry is expected.

USDA's organic rules incorporate an ecological approach to farming that has evolved over the last half-century. Farmers developed rigorous standards and management-intensive production systems for organic farming during this period.

Before USDA implemented its national organic standards, many states and most organic distributors required third-party certification to ensure that organic farmers adhered to organic production standards. USDA's new rules make certification according to the national standards mandatory.

Despite the time, costs, and effort required to meet these stringent requirements, farmers and ranchers added a million acres of certified organic land for major crops and pasture between 1997 and 2001, doubling organic pasture and more than doubling organic cropland for major crops. Total certified organic cropland

and pasture now encompasses 2.3 million acres in 48 states. Organic livestock, which require access to organic pasture, have had a boost in production since USDA listed restrictions on organic meat labeling in the late 1990's.

Similarly, consumer demand for organic goods rose throughout the 1990's - 20% or more annually - and that pace has continued. Organic products are now available in nearly 20,000 natural food stores and 73% of conventional grocery stores and account for approximately 1-2% of total food sales in the U.S.

In 2000, for the first time, more organic food was purchased in conventional supermarkets than in any other venue. Farmers' markets and other direct-market venues, which are especially popular among organic producers, have also grown in number over the last decade. Organic farmers are also finding ways to capture a larger segment of the consumer food dollar through on-farm processing, producer marketing cooperatives, and new forms of direct marketing, including agricultural subscription services. (Continued on the last page.)

## Wage Rates for Hired Workers, by Region & U.S., April 7-13, 2002, & April 6-12, 2003 1/

U.S. and Region 2/	TYPE OF WORKER						Wage Rates for All Hired Workers	
	Field		Livestock		Field & Livestock			
	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003
Dollars per Hour								
Northeast I	8.35	9.76	8.56	8.55	8.42	9.27	9.14	10.24
Northeast II	8.20	8.75	7.01	8.20	7.78	8.63	8.83	9.68
Appalachian I	7.42	8.18	8.60	8.37	7.86	8.24	8.45	8.77
Appalachian II	6.89	7.32	7.87	7.24	7.31	7.28	7.63	7.64
Southeast	7.28	7.58	8.29	8.78	7.42	8.07	7.94	8.71
FL	7.75	8.05	7.50	8.10	7.72	8.06	8.57	8.86
Lake	9.43	9.31	8.44	9.20	9.01	9.26	9.88	9.90
Cornbelt I	8.59	9.29	8.90	9.32	8.70	9.30	9.23	9.99
Cornbelt II	7.84	9.94	9.82	10.00	8.89	9.97	9.34	10.71
Delta	7.05	7.20	7.06	7.54	7.05	7.25	7.50	7.63
Northern Plains	8.48	9.08	8.06	9.28	8.31	9.16	9.22	9.46
Southern Plains	6.92	7.62	7.78	7.98	7.31	7.75	7.95	8.31
Mountain I	7.55	7.63	7.92	7.68	7.80	7.66	8.00	7.93
Mountain II	8.06	8.32	8.58	8.86	8.26	8.60	8.95	9.43
Mountain III	7.51	7.10	8.35	8.24	7.71	7.52	8.21	7.93
Pacific	8.18	8.82	9.45	9.28	8.33	8.90	9.10	9.34
CA	8.33	8.33	10.20	10.15	8.47	8.48	9.13	9.22
HI 3/	9.40	9.58		10.30	9.43	9.63	11.14	11.50
US 4/	8.06	8.40	8.43	8.75	8.15	8.49	8.83	9.16

1/ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers. 2/ Regions consist of the following: Northeast I: CT, ME, MA, NH, NY, RI, VT. Northeast II: DE, MD, NJ, PA. Appalachian I: NC, VA. Appalachian II: KY, TN, WV. Southeast: AL, GA, SC. Lake: MI, MN, WI. Cornbelt I: IL, IN, OH. Cornbelt II: IA, MO. Delta: AR, LA, MS. Northern Plains: KS, NE, ND, SD. Southern Plains: OK, TX. Mountain I: ID, MT, WY. Mountain II: CO, NV, UT. Mountain III: AZ, NM. Pacific: OR, WA. 3/ Insufficient data for livestock. 4/ Excludes AK.

## Organic Agriculture Gaining Ground (continued from the 3<sup>rd</sup> page)

The growth of the organic industry has caught the attention of Federal policymakers. The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, for example, contains several first-time

research and technical assistance provisions to assist organic crop and livestock producers with production and marketing. The “USDA Organic” label, issued in October 2002, may enhance consumer awareness of organically grown products and facilitate further growth in the organic farm sector.

SOURCE: *Organic Agriculture: Gaining Ground*, Catherine Greene, Carolyn Dimitri, Amber Waves, Volume 1, Issue 1, February 2003, Economic Research Service/USDA.

### COMING IN NEXT REPORTER

Crop Production  
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Peggy Stringer, State Statistician  
Curtis E. Lund, Deputy State Statistician  
Retta Johnson, Editor  
10 W. 15th Street, Suite 3100, Helena, Montana 59626  
406-441-1240 or 1-800-835-2612  
[www.nass.usda.gov/mt/](http://www.nass.usda.gov/mt/)      [nass-mt@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass-mt@nass.usda.gov)